DOCKING STATION INCLUDING EJECTION LEVER LOCATED UNDER COMPUTER MOUNTED ON DOCKING STATION AND COVER HELD CLOSED BY PORTION EXTENDING UNDER COMPUTER

This is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/713,256, filed on Sep. 12, 1996, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to an electronic apparatus system having a portable electronic apparatus, such as a book-type portable computer, and an extension station for use in extending the functions of the electronic apparatus, and more particularly to the structure of the extension station.

2. Description of the Related Art

A book-type portable computer has a box-shaped compact housing body. Thus, the portable computer is easy to carry, and is capable of using a battery pack mounted within the housing body as power supply in a space where commercial power is not available.

In order to enhance the portability of the portable computer, reduction in size of the housing body has been demanded more and more. The reduction in size of the housing body, however, causes reduction in mounting space within the housing body. The number of functions normally provided in the portable computer is generally less than that of functions normally provided in a desktop computer. In order to deal with this problem, the conventional portable computer has an extension port in the rear face of the housing body. The extension port is used for connection with an extension station for extending the functions of the portable computer.

The extension station has a box-shaped station body. The station body comprises an extension device, such as a CD-ROM drive or a hard disk drive, and a plurality of extension connectors. The extension device is contained within the station body. The station body has a mount portion for mounting of the portable computer. An extension port connector is disposed on a rear end portion of the mount portion. The extension port connector is electrically connected to the extension device and the extension connectors. When the portable computer is mounted on the mounted portion, the extension port connector faces the extension port of the computer. If the portable computer mounted on the mount portion is slid toward the extension port connector, the extension port of the portable computer engages the extension port connector. Thereby, the portable computer is electrically connected to the extension station.

In order to enhance the extendibility of function of the computer, an improved extension station has been manufactured, in which the extension device to be mounted in the station body can be selectively changed. The extension station comprises a plurality of device storage sections for storing extension devices, and an ejector for discharging the extension devices from the device storage sections. In general, an eject lever of the ejector is disposed on a front face or a side face of the station body so that the operator can easily handle the eject lever. Thus, the eject lever is always exposed to the outside of the station body even in the state in which the portable computer is placed on the mount portion.

The extension station in which the extension device can be changed has covers for opening and closing the device storage section. The extension station has a locking device for locking each cover in a locked position, thereby preventing theft of, mischief on, or careful removal of the extension device.

Since the eject lever is disposed on the front face or side face of the station body of the conventional extension station, the eject lever can be handled too easily. Consequently, the eject lever may be erroneously operated to discharge the extension device from the device storage section while the extension device is being used. Thus, the extension device or portable computer may be erroneously operated, or failure may occur. Moreover, the presence of the eject lever is obvious to viewers, and the antitheft security for the extension device is insufficient.

In the conventional extension station, each device storage section is equipped with the locking device, and many locking devices and fixing structures thereof are needed. Consequently, the structure of the extension station becomes complex, resulting in a higher manufacturing cost of the extension station. Furthermore, each locking device must be operated in order to lock and unlock the associated device storage section. Thus, the work for changing the extension device is time-consuming.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A first object of the present invention is to provide an electronic apparatus system capable of surely preventing an erroneous operation of or mischief on an ejector for discharging an extension device.

A second object of the invention is to provide an electronic apparatus system wherein a cover is held in a closed position by an electronic apparatus body placed on a mount portion, and a lock mechanism for exclusive use in locking the cover is not needed.

In order to achieve the above objects, there is provided an electronic apparatus system comprising:

an electronic apparatus body; and

an extension station having a mount portion on which the electronic apparatus body is detachably mounted, and a device storage section in which an extension device for extending functions of the electronic apparatus body is removably stored,

wherein the extension station has an ejector for discharging the extension device from the device storage section, the ejector having an eject lever manually operable at the time of discharging the extension device, the eject lever having an operation section exposed to the mount portion.

According to this structure, if the electronic apparatus body is placed on the mount portion, the operating section of the eject lever is covered by the electronic apparatus body. Thus, the operating section of the eject lever is not exposed to the outside of the extension station, and the extension device is protected against theft or mischief. In order to discharge the extension device from the device storage section by operating the eject lever, it is necessary to intentionally remove the electronic apparatus body from the mount portion. Thus, the extension device can be prevented from being unintentionally discharged.

In order to achieve the above objects, there is also provided an electronic apparatus system comprising:

an electronic apparatus body; and

an extension station having a mount portion on which the electronic apparatus body is detachably mounted, the extension station extending functions of the electronic apparatus body,